TITLE IX School Administrator Training

Presented to



Fall 2023

Agenda

- CCPS Title IX Complaint Structure
- Title IX History and Background
- Title IX Key Points and Terminology
- Grievance Procedure
- Investigation Process
- Appeals, Informal Resolution & After
- Complaints Involving Employees

Title IX Complaint Structure

Clayton County Public Schools Title IX Contacts (Student Complaints)

- Title IX Coordinators:
 - Equity and Compliance Division
 - Latasha Lowe (primary); Damaris Garrett (secondary)
- Formal Complaint Investigators:
 - Principal or appointed administrative designee
 - Personnel Review Officer
- Formal Complaint Decision-Makers:
 - Area Superintendent
- Appeal Decision-Makers:
 - Chief
- Informal Resolution Facilitator:
 - Student Discipline, Prevention and Intervention

CCPS Title IX Complaint & Investigation

Report or observation:

- Reported by student, parent, staff or other individual to; or
- Observed byany CCPS staff member

Meeting:

 Title IX Coordinator. Supportive measures; Right to file complaint; How to file complaint

Formal Complaint:

Employee, Student/Parent or Title IX Coordinator

Investigation:

- Principal, Designee, PRO
- Investigative report

CCPS Title IX Decision, Appeal

Decision:

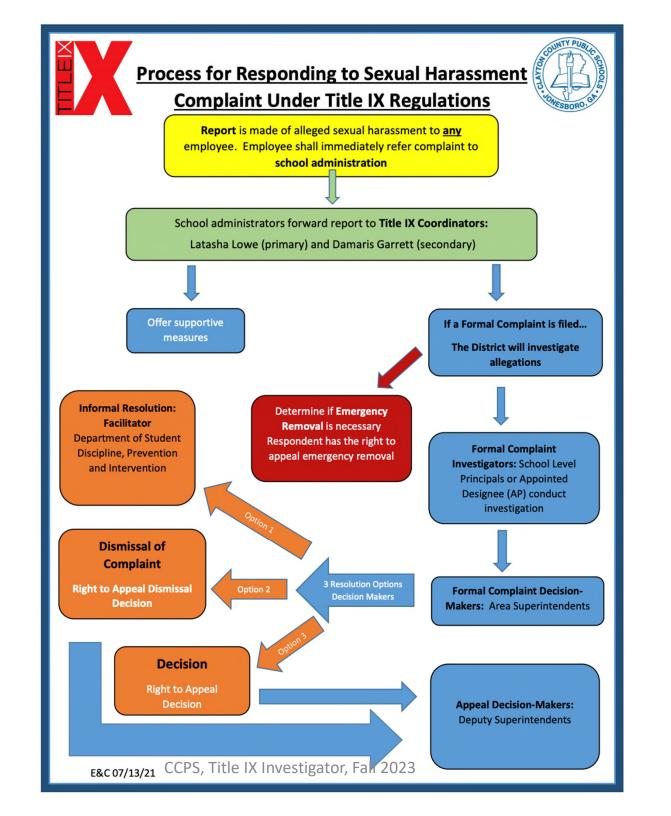
- Area superintendent
- Written determination

Appeal

- Decision or dismissal
- Chief

Informal Resolution

- At any time in this process after Formal Complaint is filed
- Department of Student Discipline, Prevention and Intervention
- Students only
- Voluntary



Title IX Resources

- CCPS Title IX policies and resources regarding sexual harassment, see:
 - https://www.clayton.k12.ga.us/departments/equity_and_compliance/title_i_x
- US Department of Education information & resources:
 - https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/ocr/sex.html

Title IX: History & Looking Forward

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

- Enacted in 1972
- Prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs for recipients of federal funding, including K-12 public school districts.

"no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under academic, extracurricular, research, occupational training, or other education program or activity operated by a recipient which receives ... Federal financial assistance "

Title IX History

 Regulations to implement Title IX were enacted reinforcing its non-discrimination mandate and prohibition on sex discrimination on hiring, admissions, athletics and other aspects of

educational programs and activities.

 Historic emphasis on athletics.



Office for Civil Rights ("OCR")

- U.S. Department of Education
- Federal agency with the responsibility of ensuring equal access to education.
- Includes all public education institutions—i.e., all state education agencies, elementary and secondary school systems, colleges and universities, vocational schools, and proprietary schools.
- Federal laws that OCR enforces prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age.

Title IX & Sexual Harassment

- Sept. 22, 2017: U.S. Department of Education ("ED")
 withdrew 2011 policy statement regarding sexual
 harassment and related guidance. Concurrently
 released interim guidance and announced
 rulemaking for new Title IX regulations regarding
 sexual harassment.
- May 6, 2020: ED released new Title IX regulations regarding sexual harassment following a 1.5-year period of review between release of the proposed and final rule.
- Aug. 14, 2020: Effective date of 2020 regulations.

Significant Changes – 2020

- Emphasis on due process
- Definition of sexual harassment under Title
 IX
- Title IX Coordinator
- Detailed grievance and investigative process
- Right to appeal
- Allowance for informal resolution

Looking forward

• What is next?





Title IX

 June 2022 – release of new proposed Title IX rule, including protections for LGBTQ students, sex-based discrimination and harassment

"The proposed regulations reflect the Department's commitment to give full effect to Title IX, ensuring that no person experiences sex discrimination in education, and that school procedures for addressing complaints of sex discrimination, including sexual violence and other forms of sex-based harassment, are clear, effective, and fair to all involved." - Catherine E. Lhamon, Assistant Secretary for

CCP Civil Rights 2023

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Title IX (2022)

- 700 pages of proposed rules.
- Released on the 50th anniversary of Title IX.
- Over 200,000 comments during 60-day comment period.
- Inclusion of sexuality, gender identity and explicit protections for LGBTQ students.
- Protections for pregnant and parenting students.
- Process for reviewing sexual assault and harassment allegations.
- While Title IX doesn't override state and local laws, it does give the federal government the power to remove funding from educational institutions that violate it. CCPS, Title IX Investigator, Fall 2023 17



Title IX: Athletics



- Proposed rule related to transgender students and athletic participation released April 6, 2023
- If a recipient adopts or applies sex-related criteria that would limit or deny a student's eligibility to participate on a male or female team consistent with their gender identity, such criteria must, for each sport, level of competition, and grade or education level:
 - (i) be substantially related to the achievement of an important educational objective, and
 - (ii) minimize harms to students whose opportunity to participate on a male or female team consistent with their gender identity would be limited or denied.



Timeframe for New Regulations



- In May 2023, the US Department of Education announced it will release the final versions of the Title IX changes in October 2023
- https://blog.ed.gov/2023/05/a-timingupdate-on-title-ix-rulemaking/

Key Provisions & Terminology

"Sexual Harassment"

- Sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:
 - Quid pro quo harassment by school employee;
 - Unwelcome conduct that reasonable person would find so severe, pervasive & objectively offensive that it effectively denies equal educational access; or
 - Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking.

1. Quid Pro Quo Harassment

An employee of the District conditioning the provision of a District aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;

- "Something for something"
- Does not require the elements of severity, pervasiveness, or objective offensiveness

2. Unwelcome Conduct

Unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would determine is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school's education program or activity

- Look for all necessary elements based upon reasonable person standard:
 - Severe;
 - Pervasive;
 - Objectively offensive; and
 - Denial of equal educational access.

3. Sexual Assault, Dating Violence

Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexbased stalking as defined under federal laws.

- "Sexual assault"- an offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the FBI
- "Dating Violence"- sex-based violence committed by a person
 - Who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and
 - Where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
 - The length of the relationship.
 - The type of relationship.
 - The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

3. Domestic Violence

"Domestic Violence"- sex-based violence which includes felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction.

3. Sex Based Stalking

"Sex-based Stalking" - engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to-

- (A) fear for his or her safety or the safety of others; or
- -(B) suffer substantial emotional distress.

"Actual Knowledge"

- Actual knowledge means notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to the District's Title IX Coordinator or to any official or employee of the District.
 - This notice requirement is not met when the only District official or employee with actual knowledge is the respondent.
- "Notice" includes, but is not limited to, a report of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator.
- What triggers actual knowledge?
 - At the K-12 level, whenever any employee (other than a respondent) has notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment.

Formal Complaint

- Description: A document alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that the District investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.
- Party: Filed by a complainant/parent or signed by the Title
 IX Coordinator
- Timing: At the time of filing a formal complaint, a complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in a District education program or activity.

Deliberate Indifference

- If a school district has actual knowledge of sexual harassment in an education program or activity of the school district against a person in the United States, it must respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent.
- Deliberately indifferent means a response to sexual harassment that is clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

Where?

- For jurisdiction under Title IX, sexual harassment must occur within the scope of a school's "education program or activity"
- Education program or activity includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the school exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurs
- May include programs or activities that occur either on-campus or off-campus.

Responding to a report of sexual harassment

- Any employee who receives information from a student alleging sexual harassment shall report it to the School Administrator or Title IX Coordinator.
- Outside report
 - If allegations involve potential violation of criminal law, report to appropriate law enforcement agency or official(s).
 - If allegations involve potential child abuse, as defined by OCGA 19-7-5, report to appropriate child welfare agency and law enforcement agency or official(s) per mandatory reporter procedures and protocol.

Response to Initial Report

- The Title IX Coordinator shall promptly:
 - Contact Complainant;
 - Offer supportive measures, which can be available with/without a formal complaint;
 - Consider complainant's wishes regarding supportive measures;
 - Explain the process of filing a formal complaint.
 - Contact the respondent
 - Also offered supportive measures.
 - If supportive measures are not provided to a complainant, document why school did not provide complainant with supportive measures and why not providing such measures is not deliberately indifferent.

"Supportive Measures"

- Description: non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed.
- Goal: restore or preserve equal access to the recipient's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the District's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment.

"Supportive Measures"

- Examples: counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other similar measures.
- Confidentiality: Maintained as confidential to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of the District to provide the supportive measures.
- Coordination: The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating effective implementation.

The Parties

- Complainant: an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.
 - If the complainant is under 18, the parent/guardian can file a complaint and act on complainant's behalf.
 - Where the Title IX Coordinator signs a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not a complainant or party.
- Respondent: an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

Filing of a Formal Complaint

- A formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX
 Coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail, by
 using the contact information listed for the Title IX
 Coordinator in the District's nondiscrimination notice
 posted on its website.
- "Document filed by a complainant" means a document or electronic submission (such as by electronic mail or through an online portal provided by the District) that contains the complainant's physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicates that the complainant is the person filing the formal complaint.
- Significance: Once a formal complaint is filed, the District's grievance process is initiated: 12023 36

Confidentiality

The District shall keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by federal or state law or regulations, or to carry out the purposes of Title IX requirements, including the conduct of any investigation or judicial proceeding arising thereunder.

Title IX Complaint Procedures

Report of Sexual Harassment

- Format: Reports or complaints may be verbal or written
- When: May be made at any time (including during non-business hours)
- Delivery: In person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail
- Contact: Using the contact information posted on the school and/or district website.

Initial Report

- Reporter: Any student, employee, parent or other person wishing to report or file a complaint alleging a violation as described above shall promptly notify either the principal or counselor at his/her school or the Title IX Coordinator designated and authorized by the District.
- Any employee who receives information from a student alleging sexual harassment shall report it to the Principal or Title IX Coordinator.

Meeting

 The Title IX Coordinator shall promptly contact the complainant.

Discussion:

- Availability of supportive measures
- Consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures
- Inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint, and
- Explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

Filing of Complaint

- Note: A complainant is NOT required to file a formal complaint.
- The Title IX Coordinator should evaluate in light of the duty to ensure the safety of CCPS and to comply with state and federal law.

Equitable Process

- The District shall treat complainant(s) and respondent(s) equitably by following this grievance process before punishing the respondent or providing remedies to the complainant.
- Remedies will be designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District's education program or activity. Such remedies may include the same individualized services described as "supportive measures." However, remedies need not be nondisciplinary or non-punitive and need not avoid burdening the respondent.

Emergency Removal

Emergency removal of a respondent from an educational program or activity is permitted on an emergency basis **IF** the school district:

- Undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis,
- Determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and
- Provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

Still subject to the student's rights under the IDEA, Section 504 and ADA

CCPS, Title IX Investigator, Fall 2023

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Notice Letter

- Timing: Within 3 business days of receipt of a formal complaint, the District shall provide a written notice letter.
- Recipients: Delivered to the known parties, ie.
 Complainant and Respondent(s)
- Notice of Title IX formal complaint process
- Notice of allegations alleged to constitute sexual harassment under Title IX

Notice Letter, Continued

- Statement that Respondent is presumed not responsible and that determination is made at the conclusion of the process
- Right to advisor of choice (including attorney)
- Right to inspect and review evidence
- Code of conduct prohibition on knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information
- Range of disciplinary sanctions and remedies that may be implemented

Dismissal of a Formal Complaint

- Two types of dismissal :
 - Mandatory dismissal
 - Discretionary dismissal
- Notice: Upon dismissal, the District must promptly send written notice and reason(s) for the dismissal simultaneously to the parties.
- Appealable.

Mandatory Dismissal

- District <u>must</u> dismiss a formal complaint if:
 - The conduct alleged would not meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX;
 - The alleged sexual harassment did not occur in the school's educational program or activity; or
 - The alleged sexual harassment did not occur in the U.S.

Dismissal does not preclude action under another provision of the District's code of conduct or availability of supportive measures.

Discretionary Dismissal

- A school may dismiss a complaint if:
 - The complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that he/she wishes to withdraw the formal complaint or some of its allegations;
 - The respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the school; or
 - Specific circumstances prevent the school from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination about the allegations.

Other Requirements

- Preponderance of the evidence
- Presumption of innocence
- Objective evaluation of all relevant evidence.
- Credibility determinations may not be based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.
- Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or any person facilitating the informal resolution process may not have a conflict of interest or bias and must receive adequate training.

Investigative Process

Outside Reporting

- If at any point in the reporting or investigation of reported sexual harassment of a student, a staff member, site coordinator or investigator determines that the reported harassment should more properly be termed abuse, the reported incident or situation shall be referred pursuant to the established protocol for child abuse investigation.
- Required reporting will include reports to DFCS,
 District and outside law enforcement per District reporting procedures for suspected child abuse.

Timeline

- Initial: After providing written notice to the parties of the receipt of a formal complaint, the District will have an initial 20 business days to investigate.
- Delay: District shall allow for temporary delay of the grievance process or the limited extension of time frames for good cause with written notice to the complainant and the respondent of the delay or extension and the reasons for the action.
 - Good cause may include considerations such as the absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.

Timeline

- 3 business days from formal complaint filing: written notice letter to parties
- 10 calendar days from notice letter: parties may submit evidence to investigators
- 20 business days from formal complaint filing: initial review of evidence completed and sent to parties for review.
- 10 calendar days from receipt of evidence: parties may provide written responses.
- 35 business days from notice letter: investigative report finalized, distributed.

Investigators

- School administrators investigate complaints of Title IX sexual harassment complaints.
- Principal or designee
- PRO

Non-Bias

- Status as respondent, complainant, witness should not weigh into credibility determinations;
- Presumption of innocence through investigative process;
- Title IX Coordinator, investigators, decision-makers and other facilitators must:
 - Not have a conflict of interest;
 - Be non-biased.

Parties & the Investigation

- Equal opportunity
- No restrictions
- Right to an advisor
- Written notice of interviews, meetings
- Access to evidence
- Written responses

Equal Opportunity

- The school must provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses and evidence, including expert witnesses
 - Inculpatory or exculpatory evidence.
- The school can't restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation, or to gather and present relevant evidence.
- Parties must have same opportunities to have others present during the grievance proceedings, including access to an advisor of choice for any meetings. CCPS, Title IX Investigator, Fall 2023

Investigative processes:

- Interviews of complainant, respondent, witnesses;
- Review of accessible law enforcement documents;
- Review of relevant student or employee records;
- Gathering and examining other relevant documents and evidence.

Evidence

- Objectively evaluate relevant evidence
- Relevant evidence: evidence that may tend to make the allegations at issue more or less likely to be true.
- The school is not allowed to access a party's personal records if they are maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other professional for the purpose of treatment to the party, without consent.

Interview/Meeting Notice

- Where a party has been invited to or is expected to participate in an investigative interview or other meeting, written notice will be issued to that party:
 - Date;
 - Time;
 - Location;
 - Participants; and
 - Purpose of the meeting
- Minimum 48 hours of notice.

Access/Response to Evidence

- The investigator(s) will send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, any non-privileged evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy.
- No later than ten (10) calendar days after the receipt of the initial review of the evidence, each party has the right to submit a written response to the evidence, which the investigator(s) will review and consider prior to the completion of the investigative report

Written Report

- Prepared within 35 business days after notice letter of formal complaint
- An investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence
- Distribution: Sent to each party and any advisor 10 days prior to the determination regarding responsibility
- Format: Electronic format or a hard copy
- Review: Allow for party/advisor review and written response.
- Questions.

Written Report

- Description of investigation and evidence: The investigation report should succinctly describe all information collected by investigator
- No decision or recommendation: The investigator's role is *not* to make any recommendation as to whether a Title IX violation has occurred. That is the role of an independent decision-maker.

Decision

- The decision-maker shall, within 10 days of the conclusion of the question and answer period, issue a written determination regarding responsibility simultaneously to both parties.
- Individual cannot be the same person(s) as the Title
 IX Coordinator or the investigator(s)
- Area Superintendents



Decision

- Standard of Review: Preponderance of the evidence.
- Did Respondent commit the alleged violation?
- Presumption: Respondent not responsible for alleged conduct until conclusion of grievance process and determination of responsibility.



Elements of Written Decision:

- Identification of allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment under Title IX;
- Description of procedural steps taken from receipt of formal complaint through determination;
- Findings of fact supporting each determination;
- Conclusions regarding the application of the grievance process to the facts;



Written Decision, continued:

- A statement of, rationale for, the result regarding each allegation, including:
 - Determination regarding responsibility
 - Any disciplinary sanctions imposed upon Respondent
 - Whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to education program or activity will be provided to the complainant
- Procedures and permissible bases for appeal.



Written Decision, continued:

- Provided to parties simultaneously
- Final either on the date the District provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal if filed; or on the date that an appeal would be no longer timely (if none is filed)
- Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of remedies.

Investigation Process: General Tips



Practical Tips: Conducting Investigation and Witness Interviews

- How do administrators prepare to conduct an investigation of a Title IX related incident?
 - Developing good skills in conducting investigations and interviewing witnesses can prove invaluable in keeping the school a safe and productive place.



Practical Tips: Interview/Investigation Checklist

Useful considerations in conducting investigations and interviewing witnesses:

- Prioritize investigations
- Act quickly to secure evidence and statements
- Properly plan from the beginning
- Document effectively
- Remain professional and objective
- Separate witnesses
- Do not prejudice or influence witnesses
- Focus on the facts



Planning, Prioritizing and Securing Evidence

- <u>Prioritize Investigations</u>: Time and resources are always limited, so you must necessarily make decisions in allocating time and resources.
 - Investigations affecting the safety and well-being of students and personnel should be given the highest priority.
 - Imminent dangers must be addressed immediately.
- Properly plan from the beginning: the formal investigative process should begin with a sound plan.



Planning, Prioritizing and Securing Evidence

- Act quickly to secure evidence and statements: As time passes, memories become weaker or influenced by others; evidence may be lost or destroyed.
 - Interviews and written witness statements
 - Pull/secure video
 - Photographs



Documenting and Interviewing

- <u>Document effectively</u>: The process and results of an investigation must be thoroughly, accurately, and professionally documented.
- Remain professional and objective
- Separate witnesses



The Interview Process

- Do not prejudice or influence witnesses: Be careful not to prejudice witnesses directly or indirectly.
- Focus on the facts: Focus questions on what the witnesses actually detected with their own senses.

Appeals, Informal Resolution & After the Complaint

Appeal

- The District shall offer both parties an appeal from:
 - Determination regarding responsibility, and
 - District's dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations therein.
- 10 days

Limited Basis

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; or
- The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

Appeal Process

- Written Notice: Notify the other party when an appeal is filed
- Equal Process: Implement appeal procedures equally for both parties
- Decision Maker: Chief
- Party Statement: Each party has five days to submit a written statement
- Evidence: No consideration of additional evidence, unless it is new evidence that could affect outcome that was not reasonably available before.

Appeal Decision

- Written decision
- Contents: Result of the appeal and the rationale for the result
- Timeline: Decision will be issued within 10 business days from parties' submission of written statement
- Final: Decision is final.
 - OCR

Informal Resolution

- Voluntary
- Only available if formal complaint is filed
- Format: Informal resolution process, such as mediation. Does not involve a full investigation and adjudication.

Informal Resolution

- Timing: At any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility.
- Written Consent: Parties must voluntarily provide written consent.
- Students only: Unavailable to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.

Record Keeping Requirements

- All Title IX records should be maintained for 7 years
 - Each sexual harassment investigation including any determination regarding responsibility, disciplinary sanctions, remedies;
 - Appeal;
 - Informal resolution;
 - Training materials.

No Retaliation

- Non-Retaliation: May not intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation or proceeding under Title IX.
- 1st Amendment: Exercise First Amendment rights does not constitute retaliation.
- Code of Conduct: Charging an individual with a code of conduct violation for making a materially false statement in bad faith not retaliation.

Allegations Involving Employees

Employee as Respondent

- Referred to Equity and Compliance Personnel Review Officer (PRO) for investigation
- Determine if allegations rise to level of child abuse or other criminal misconduct, subject to District and/or outside law enforcement reporting
 - If behavior does cross line, make required law enforcement and/or DFCS referrals

Employees as Complainants

- Title VII and Title IX can apply to employee reports of sexual harassment.
- If an employee is a complainant, report to Title IX Coordinator to initiate the investigative process through Equity and Compliance.

Questions?

